

Dear Senator Winfield, Senator Kasser, Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I oppose **H.B. 6355: AN ACT CONCERNING A RISK PROTECTION ORDERS OR WARRANTS**

I support **AN ACT PERMITTING PERSONS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES USING NONLETHAL DEFENSIVE IMPLEMENTS**

H.B. 6355 is an incredible bill in that it ignores practically every aspect of due process, the hallmark of American justice. The premise that we can ignore citizens' rights in the hopes that it *might* provide a benefit in safety is how we wound up with practices like "stop and frisk". By denying gun owners of their 2nd, 4th and 14th Amendment rights, this bill reduces them to some type of second-class citizens. Its supporters try to justify denying rights we hold sacred for everyone else with anecdotes and wishful thinking. Has this become the threshold for American justice? It is unbelievable in this day and age that we are even having this discussion.

Everyone on both sides of the issues agrees that those who are a proven danger to themselves or others should not have access to firearms. For years we had this mechanism that involved an actual investigation and interview of the accused with due process. What this bill ignores completely is that those people need help and it does nothing to provide that help. Once again, we pretend to fix a mental health issue by stripping the rights of a broad segment of society.

This bill provides no rigor in determining the veracity of claims. There is no role for Law Enforcement investigation, no requirement for evidence or corroboration of claims. There is no protection for the accused with right to counsel, cross examination or any of the other protections we take for granted. Under the best-case scenario it would take thousands of dollars in legal fees and years for rights and property to be returned.

Most concerning is that this bill sets the stage for abuse like no other. Opening up the set of accusers to an even larger set of people who may hold a grudge, or even a blanket dislike of gun owners. There is no provision for accountability and civil liability for the accuser. If that sounds like wild paranoia, then maybe someone could provide evidence of anyone filing an unfounded ERPO under the current law who has been held accountable when the warrant was dismissed. These are dismissed approximately 32% of the time now. If there was even a shred of accountability to be had, we would have examples, yet we have none.

Finally, I hope that you will also support **H.B. 6491 AN ACT CONCERNING NONLETHAL ELECTRONIC DEFENSE WEAPONS** which will allow people to defend themselves even if they choose not to carry a firearm.

Respectfully,

Tom Maloney, Stonington